

Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903)

1 *The Muster of the North*

A. D. 1641.

I.

Joy! joy! the day is come at last, the day of hope and pride —  
And see! our crackling bonfires light old Bann's rejoicing tide,  
And gladsome bell, and bugle-horn from Newry's captured Towers,  
Hark! how they tell the Saxon swine, this land is ours, IS OURS!

II.

Glory to God! my eyes have seen the ransomed fields of Down, 5  
My ears have drunk the joyful news, "Stout Phelim hath his own."  
Oh! may they see and hear no more, oh! may they rot to clay,  
When they forget to triumph in the conquest of to-day.

III.

Now, now we'll teach the shameless Scot to purge his thievish maw,  
Now, now the Court may fall to pray, for Justice is the Law, 10  
Now shall the Undertaker square for once his loose accounts,  
*We'll* strike, brave boys, a fair result, from all his false amounts.

IV.

Come, trample down their robber rule, and smite its venal spawn,  
Their foreign laws, their foreign church, their ermine and their lawn,  
With all the specious fry of fraud that robbed us of our own; 15  
And plant our ancient laws again, beneath our lineal throne.

V.

Our standard flies o'er fifty towers, and twice ten thousand men;  
Down have we pluck'd the pirate Red never to rise agen;  
The Green alone shall stream above our native field and flood —  
The spotless Green, save where its folds are gemmed with Saxon blood! 20

VI.

Pity! no, no, you dare not Priest — not you, our Father, dare  
Preach to us now that Godless creed — the murderer's blood to spare;  
To spare his blood, while tombless still our slaughtered kin implore  
“Graves and revenge” from Gobbin-Cliffs and Carrick's bloody shore!

VII.

Pity! well, if you needs must whine, let pity have its way, 25  
Pity for all our comrades true, far from our side to-day;  
The prison-bound who rot in chains, the faithful dead who poured  
Their blood 'neath Temple's lawless axe or Parsons' ruffian sword.

VIII.

Pity! — could we “forget — forgive,” if we were clods of clay,  
Our martyred priests, our banished chiefs, our race in dark decay, 30  
And worse than all — you know it, Priest — the daughters of our land,  
With wrongs we blushed to name until the sword was in our hand!

IX.

They smote us with the swearer's oath, and with the murderer's knife,  
We in the open field will fight, fairly for land and life;  
But, by the Dead and all their wrongs, and by our hopes to-day, 35  
One of us twain shall fight their last, or be it we or they —

X.

They banned our faith, they banned our lives, they trod us into earth,  
Until our very patience stirred their bitter hearts to mirth;  
Even this great flame that wraps them now, not *we* but *they* have bred,  
Yes, this is their own work, and now, THEIR WORK BE ON THEIR HEAD. 40

XI.

Nay, Father, tell us not of help from Leinster's Norman Peers,  
If we shall shape our holy cause to match their selfish fears —  
Helpless and hopeless be their cause, who brook a vain delay,

Our ship is launched, our flag's afloat, whether they come or stay.

XII.

Let silken Howth, and savage Slane still kiss their tyrant's rod, 45  
And pale Dunsany still prefer his Monarch to his God,  
Little we lack their father's sons the Marchmen of the Pale,  
While Irish hearts and Irish hands have Spanish blades and mail

XIII.

Then, let them stay to bow and fawn, or fight with cunning words;  
I fear me more their courtly acts than England's hireling swords; 50  
Natheless their creed they hate us still, as the Despoiler hates,  
Would God they loved their prey no more, our kinsmen's lost estates!

XIV.

Our rude array's a jagged rock to smash the spoiler's power,  
Or need we aid, His aid we have who doomed this gracious hour;  
Of yore He led our Hebrew sires to peace through strife and pain, 55  
And us He leads the self-same path, the self-same goal to gain.

XV.

Down from the sacred hills whereon a SAINT communed with God,  
Up from the vale where Bagnall's blood manured the reeking sod,  
Out from the stately woods of Truagh, M'Kenna's plundered home,  
Like Malin's waves, as fierce and fast, our faithful clansmen come. 60

XVI.

Then, brethren, *on!* — O'NIAL's shade would frown to see you pause —  
Our banished Hugh, our martyred Hugh, is watching o'er your cause —  
His generous error lost the land — he deem'd the Norman true,  
Oh, forward! friends, it must not lose the land again in you!

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